

BEST PRACTICE CATALOG

Project Title: **NEW START – SPECIALIZED CURRICULUM**

Function Category: ☒ PATIENT-FOCUSED ☐ ORGANIZATION ☐ STRUCTURES

Subcategory: **Education**

Heading: **Patients**

Key Word(s): **Specialized curriculum, independence, successful, language/learning disabilities**

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Purpose: This specialized curriculum is to provide knowledge and skills necessary to the support of independence and successful participation in therapeutic activities – for clients in forensic mental health facilities who have language/learning disabilities, ADD/ADHD and/or traumatic brain injury, in addition to major mental illness. Though invisible, these problems do contribute to the number of clients who enter mental health and criminal justice institutions. Court documented drops in recidivism rates (of greater than 409 percent) have been achieved in programs where clients have received skills training to increase their awareness – and develop strategies to “by-pass” or to “cope” with these disabilities. Self-awareness is critical to developing self-determination skills.

Brief Description: NEW START classes offer communication-based instruction and practice with specific “by-pass” and coping skills for learning/processing difficulties with strategies for anger management, social skills, and problem-solving issues. Personal learning styles, impacts of personal strengths/weaknesses, and mental health issues are covered. Group activities include a variety of sensory awareness and hands-on activities, paper and pencil tasks, discussion, and role-play. Video-feedback is also used. This class is designed for a 22-week session, two times per week, 2 hours each, in small groups (maximum 10 clients).

Selection Basis/Criteria: New START challenges.

The following items are available regarding this Best Practice:

☒ Photographs ☐ Video Tape ☒ Drawings ☒ Manual (excerpts)

☐ Other _____

DATE SUBMITTED: **October 19, 1998**

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